

What is claimed is:

1. A synthetic mulch material sized, shaped, and colored to imitate a natural mulch, wherein said synthetic mulch is comprised of:

(a) a plurality of rubber particles, with the rubber selected from the group consisting of natural polymers and synthetic high polymers, with said rubber particles having an outer surface designed and dimensioned to look like natural mulch selected from the group consisting of pea gravel, wood chips, and tree bark, and a length ranging between about 1/16 inch and about 8 inches, and a width ranging between about 1/16 inches and about 2 inches; and,

(b) a coating added in an amount equal to between about 2% and about 20% by volume of said rubber particles, and with said coating covering said rubber particles, thereby forming said synthetic mulch.

2. The synthetic mulch of Claim 1 wherein said rubber particles are preferably selected from the group consisting of waste rubber buffings and ground tires.

3. The synthetic mulch of Claim 1 wherein said coating is comprises a pigment and resin.

4. The synthetic mulch of Claim 3 wherein said resin is selected from the group consisting of solvent and water-based resins.

5. The synthetic mulch of Claim 1 wherein said coating is added in an amount equal to between about 3% and about 10% by volume of said rubber particles.

6. The synthetic mulch of Claim 1 wherein said coating is added in an amount equal to between about 2.5% and about 5% by volume of said rubber particles.

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7. The synthetic mulch of Claim 4 wherein said water-based resin is selected from the resin binder group consisting of acrylic, vinylchloride, polyurethane, styrene butadiene styrene, polyvinylidene chloride, neoprene, and combinations thereof.

8. The synthetic mulch of Claim 4 wherein said solvent-based resin selected from the resin binder group consisting of polyurethane, hypalon, neoprene, chlorinated polyethylene, vinylchloride, vinyl acetate, chlorinated rubber, and combinations thereof.

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9. A method for forming a synthetic mulch sized, shaped, and colored to imitate a natural mulch, with said method for forming said synthetic mulch including the following steps:

(a) shredding an amount of rubber to form a plurality of rubber particles ranging in size between about a quarter inch and about four inches;

(b) adding an amount of coating to said shredded rubber particles, so as to color said particles to look like natural mulch; and,

(c) tumbling said coating and said rubber particles to form said colored synthetic mulch.

10. The method for forming the synthetic mulch of Claim 9 wherein said coating is comprised of pigment and resin.

11. The method for forming the synthetic mulch of Claim 10 wherein said resin is selected from the group consisting of solvent and water-based resins.

12. The method for forming the synthetic mulch of Claim 11 wherein said water-based resin is selected from the resin binder group consisting of acrylic, vinylchloride, polyurethane, styrene butadiene styrene, polyvinylidene chloride, neoprene, and combinations thereof.

13. The method for forming the synthetic mulch of Claim 11 wherein said solvent-based resin is selected from the resin binder group consisting of polyurethane, hypalon, neoprene, chlorinated polyethylene, vinylchloride, vinyl acetate, chlorinated rubber, and combinations thereof.